



## **League of Arizona Cities and Towns Annual Conference**

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer  
Thursday, September 1, 2011  
Noon

Thank you, and good afternoon, everyone.

Mayor Walkup ...

-- Mayor Von Gausig ...

-- Councilman Mitchell ...

-- Other members of the Executive Committee ...

-- General members ...

-- And guests ...

Thank you for that warm welcome.

The last time I spoke to all of you, I was Governor – BUT ... I was also a CANDIDATE for Governor.

While I greatly enjoyed being the LATTER, I much prefer the FORMER – if only because it meant you might invite me back.

And, you DID!

So, I thank you for allowing me this return engagement.

I was delighted to learn that Commissioner Bersin would be here -- so thanks to you as well, Commissioner, for being with us today.

Well, much has happened to our state -- and our cities and towns -- since I spoke with all of you last -- some of it tragic -- happening right here in Tucson -- some of it absolutely uplifting.

The common theme, however, has been one of strength, renewal, and a re-dedication to the future of our great state.

I'm proud of what we've done so far.

I'm proud that we've been able to work together this past year, to bring Arizona back from the brink.

-- State Government is smaller.

-- State Government is more efficient.

-- State Government is focused on the future.

I thank those of you who PUBLICLY and STRONGLY supported Proposition 100. Without it, cuts to education and other services would have been FAR deeper and state shared revenues with cities most likely would have been cut.

So, I'm proud of the hard work that allows me to stand here in front of you today, and say at long last ...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, TODAY ARIZONA HAS A POSITIVE CASH BALANCE!

Given the hand we were dealt, that is no small achievement.

Though we're not out of the woods yet, we're making our way to the clearing.

We're on the right path.

We are putting Arizona back to work with the Arizona Competitiveness Package and the formation of the Commerce Authority focused SOLELY on quality job creation AND retention.

This fall, I will be traveling to your cities and towns to engage your communities with a call to action -- generating parent and teacher awareness of the benefits of the new education reforms and how they improve student achievement.

It's about giving parents CHOICES in where they send their students.

It's about giving families the INFORMATION they need to make that decision.

It's a response to calls from the business community to provide leadership and vision for the state.

Earlier, I mentioned the formation of the Commerce Authority which is based on a belief in the awesome power of free enterprise – with private businesses finally freed to compete on the global stage – we're focused on both urban AND RURAL job creation.

We're helping ensure that business formation and business growth stems from EVERY region of the state.

And, because local governments play a vital role in attracting business to Arizona, you will now play a role within Commerce Authority structure.

Now, let me address some specific issues that might be of special interest to you – such as my veto of Senate Bill 1322 – the bill that would have privatized services for the cities of Phoenix and Tucson.

Everyone in this room should know I am a strong proponent of privatization and responsible stewardship in government and have a strong track record in this regard.

As Governor, privatization is a key element in my Four Cornerstones of Reform.

Senate Bill 1322, which started with a similar spirit of enhanced privatization and innovation -- was filled with shortcomings -- including the omission of vital definitions and the parameters by which anticipated cost is to be determined.

The language also had potential for jeopardizing the tax exempt bond status of public buildings.

Furthermore, local taxpayers expect careful oversight and accountability of justice and public safety functions such as court administration and crime lab staff.

These are just a few examples of what would have been privatized under the bill.

City councils currently have the ability to outsource, and they do that when they determine it is in the best interest of the taxpayer.

I agree that ALL levels of government must continue to find ways to cut costs.

So, I ask that you continue to explore ways to improve efficiencies within your own cities and towns.

I've made it clear that I was increasingly concerned about many bills introduced this past session that micromanaged decisions at the local level – and abandoned the conservative belief that the most effective, responsible and responsive government is government closest to the people. With regard to Senate Bill 1525 – the impact fee bill -- you came to the table with solid recommendations and the legislation made substantial changes to the system for homebuilders to compensate cities and towns for infrastructure serving new development.

My office and legislative staff worked with the parties to meet in the middle.

Now, I don't have to tell you that meeting in the middle often means that neither side is COMPLETELY satisfied.

But, you should know that I made sure cities were at the table AND I would not agree to such a large reform package that you all were not a part of ... I've also ensured that before entertaining further changes, these new reforms need time to be implemented.

I vetoed House Bill 1379 – the consumer fireworks bill -- because I believe in local control.

I support the ability for each city, town and county to assess its own unique circumstances and make the appropriate decision at the local level.

SB 1379 modified the authority of counties, cities and towns to regulate use of consumer fireworks.

We will not always agree, but I will never question your love for this state or your commitment to doing what you believe is right.

So, in that spirit, let me close by thanking you for helping me turn Arizona away from the era of big government -- and turn instead to local authorities – YOU -- who understand what's best for your own communities.

As Ronald Reagan said, "The more government we can keep at the local levels, in local hands, the better off we are and the more freedom we will have."

May God bless you and your families -- our cities and towns -- and our Great State of Arizona.

And may God always bless and protect the United States of America.

Thank you.